



**STATEMENT OF PROCEEDINGS FOR THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
HELD IN ROOM 739
OF THE KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012**

Monday, June 6, 2011

10:00 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Present: Chair Curry, Vice Chair Olivas, Vice Chair Savelle, Commissioner Franzen, Commissioner Kang, Commissioner Kleinberg, Commissioner McClaney, Commissioner Rudnick, Commissioner Sorkin, Commissioner Trevino-Powell and Commissioner Williams

Excused: Vice Chair Friedman, Commissioner Berger, Commissioner Biondi and Commissioner Murray

1. Call to order. (11-2499)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Curry at 10:07 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

2. Introduction of June 6, 2011, meeting attendees. (11-2500)

Self-introductions were made.

3. Approval of the agenda for June 6, 2011. (11-2501)

On motion of Commissioner Trevino-Powell, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg (Commissioners, Berger, Biondi, Friedman, Murray being absent), the agenda for June 6, 2011, was unanimously approved.

4. Approval of the minutes of May 16, 2011. (11-2502)

On motion of Commissioner Rudnick, seconded by Commissioner

DRAFT

Franzen (Commissioners, Berger, Biondi, Friedman, and Murray being absent), the minutes for May 16, 2011, were approved.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

II. REPORT

- 5.** Chair's Report by Patricia Curry, Chair, for June 6, 2011. (11-2503)

Chair Curry reported the following:

- **A Daily News article dated June 2, 2011 reported that a Los Angeles County Probation Officer who worked as a case manager for the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) allegedly stole thousands of dollars from at least 11 homeless youths who entrusted him with their money. The fraud was only discovered when the Probation Officer's files were reviewed when he died unexpectedly in March 2011. He was assigned to the DCFS' Transitional Housing Program, which helps young men and women between 18 and 21 become self-sufficient after leaving foster care. Probation Officer was also responsible for helping them get jobs, and depositing part of their earnings into special trust funds, which for most were the only assets they had.**

Diane Wagner, DCFS Acting Deputy Director for Service Bureau I, stated that the extent of the fraud is not yet clear as the Auditor-Controller continues its investigation. In addition, a corrective action plan has been completed and the youth have been reimbursed.

Chair Curry indicated that this fraud raises a bigger issue in that emancipated youth do not have the ability to appeal to independent third party to investigate these types of issues.

The Commission inquired about who the DCFS Ombudsman was and if he/she may present on its role in the grievance and claims process at a future Commission meeting; Ms. Wagner agreed to forward the contact information for the DCFS Ombudsman to the Commission.

The Commission inquired about the possibility of depositing the emancipated youth's money into checking accounts, and Ms. Wagner reported that as part of the corrective action plan, additional checks

and balances have been implemented to prevent any one individual from having access to the emancipated youth's funds. Additionally, checks will be mailed directly to the youth.

- Board of Supervisors [Agenda Item No. 60 of June 7, 2011](#), related to the Governance Structure Assessment by the Chief Executive Office was e-mailed to the Commission by staff. The [CEO memo dated June 2, 2011](#) was in response to Mayor Antonovich's March 8, 2011 motion ([Agenda Item 6 of 03/08/11](#)). The letter stated that the CEO in coordination with the Board's Chiefs of Staff reviewed the cluster and governance structure to best support the County as it transitions from a collection of independent departments to an organization of integrated, more transparent, and interdependent Departments.

The Commission expressed concern with recommendations numbers nine and ten. Recommendation nine elevates the role of the CEO's Service Integration Branch to assume responsibility for identifying, prioritizing, planning, assessing, implementing and reporting progress against the plans for all major Board initiatives that cross clusters, especially those that impact the lives of children. Recommendation ten states that until DCFS and Juvenile Probation are stabilized have those Departments report to the Service Integration Branch (SIB) rather than their traditional Cluster. Subsequently, other priority Departments identified by the Board will report through SIB for focused attention.

Chair Curry requested that Commissioners contact their respective Board Offices to express the Commissions thoughts and concerns.

After discussion, Chair Curry's verbal report was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

III. COMMITTEE/WORKGROUP UPDATES

6. Childcare Policy Roundtable Update
 - Ann Franzen, Commission Representative (Continued from the meeting of May 16, 2011). (11-2270)

Commissioner Franzen reported the following:

- The Childcare Policy Roundtable (Roundtable) is looking forward to

the availability of the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) in two new communities. STEP is the first pilot quality rating and improvement system for licensed child care programs serving children ages 0-5. STEP was developed by the Roundtable to provide parents with clear, concise information on the quality of individual child care settings.

- The Roundtable is hopeful that STEP may be available to five additional communities in the near future. Additionally, the Roundtable has been conducting community outreach in order to educate families about the multitude of services available to them.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Commissioner Franzen added the following:

- The STEP program is a countywide program and is administered in a “place based” format. The Roundtable would like to make the STEP program available to more communities.
- The STEP program rates Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Homes. The STEP program was initially a pilot project, but since its successful launch in 2007, the program continues to grow. Unfortunately, expanding the program to additional communities has been slow due to limited staffing.

After discussion, Commissioner Franzen's update was received and filed.

7. Faith-Based Committee Update

- Ann Franzen, Committee Chair. (Continued from the meeting of May 16, 2011). (11-1232)

Commissioner Franzen reported the following:

- The Faith-Based Committee has not met regularly due to conflicting schedules. However, with the addition of Commissioner Kang, the Faith-Based Committee will meet and discuss goals for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Service Planning Areas (SPA) that utilize the faith-based community have enjoyed its great success. The Faith-Based community is willing to help in any capacity.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Commissioner Franzen added the following:

- **Commissioner Franzen suggested that Commissioner Kang begin Chairing the Faith-Based Committee when it begins to meet regularly in September 2011. The goal of the Committee will be to increase the use of the faith-based community throughout the SPA's and to eliminate the stigma that the use of the faith-based community only adds to the already strenuous workload of social workers.**
- **The Faith-Based Committee looks forward to meeting and expanding the use of the faith-based community.**

Commissioner Kang stated that there are three factors needed to make the Faith-Based Committee work:

1. **There must be a dedicated DCFS staff person that is committed to making it work. The success seen at the DCFS Torrance office when it was utilizing the faith-based community was due to the commitment of that particular staff person.**
2. **Connection with community partners whether it be from a church, synagogue or other facility must be made. Regardless of who the community partner is, it is important to connect with someone who is willing to take charge and be the liaison between DCFS and the community.**
3. **Communication is the key to connect these resources.**

After discussion, Commissioner Franzen's update was received and filed.

8. **Public Health Nurse Workgroup Update**
 - **Helen Kleinberg, Commission Representative (11-2263)**

Commissioner Kleinberg reported the following:

- **The Public Health Nurse Workgroup (workgroup) was convened due to great concern for children ages 0-2 and to find additional resources for the social workers. Through a DCFS reunification report, social workers stated the great results they achieved by utilizing public health nurses.**

- During the tenure of former DCFS Director Peter Digre, the department began a nursing program. The nurses were allowed to go out with the social workers and help assess the children. A few years later, the Department of Public Health (DPH) decided to incorporate the use of nurses in child welfare; however those nurses were restricted to foster children only. There was friction between the two nursing programs and confusion as to which nurse a social worker could use.
- The workgroup discovered that the DPH nurses were collecting the medical data and inputting the data for the foster youth. As a result, the workgroup spoke to Fifth District Deputy Helen Berberian to discuss how to better integrate the use of nurses not only after the child comes into the system, but on the front-end as well.
- During the workgroup meeting, Dr. Charles Sophy, Medical Director of DCFS indicated that he too was concerned with the current system for utilizing nurses. Dr. Sophy informed the workgroup of the success of a pilot nursing program he developed for the Lakewood office. Dr. Sophy assigned one nurse to each unit, which is comprised of approximately seven social workers. However, to duplicate the success of the Lakewood office, DCFS would need 540 additional nurses, unfortunately, DCFS only has 110 nurses. Dr. Sophy assured the workgroup that he would develop a sustainable plan with the current number of nurses available to DCFS.
- There is new unfunded legislation that requires all Public Health Nurses to assess every detained youth; however, status of the legislation is currently unknown.

Chair Curry added that she was impressed with DPH's responsiveness and willingness to help, and that one of the issues discussed during a meeting with DPH Chief Deputy Jonathan Freedman and DPH Director of Children's Medical Services, Wesley Ford is the concern of having DPH nurses input data for social workers. As a result of that discussion, and to eliminate the input of data by DPH nurses, DPH was able to obtain funding from the state to hire nine clerical staff to input data.

Lara Holtzman, the Alliance for Children's Rights added that there is concern for who should be entering in medical data into CWS/CMS. To ensure data validity, those entering the data should have some medical background.

Chair Curry indicated duplicate entries of the same medical data into different systems cumbersome and time consuming. The CEO's office is working on connecting those systems so that information does not need to be entered twice.

Ms. Holtzman inquired about the fact that nurses are not allowed to touch the youth.

After discussion, Commissioner Kleinberg's update was received and filed.

9. Childhood Wellness Committee Update

- Adelina Sorkin, Committee Chair (11-2655)
- The Wellness Committee followed the Commission's request to meet with Dr. Sophy regarding childhood Asthma. Dr. Sophy provided Commissioner Sorkin with the DCFS F Rate Children and a breakdown of the children by age and ethnicity with asthma in Los Angeles. Currently there are 230 F Rate children with asthma and approximately 50 percent are six-years old and younger. F Rate is designated for youth with a medical condition. In addition, there is a disproportionate amount of African American and Hispanic youth with asthma.
- Dr. Sophy indicated that a policy would be drafted to include no F Rate child with asthma be placed in out-of-home care where there are smokers.

After discussion, Commissioner Sorkin's update was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

IV. PRESENTATIONS

10. Presentation on DCFS Adoptions Program.

- Bill Thomas, Adoptions Acting Division Chief
- Joseph Prusak, Adoptions Assistant Regional Administrator (11-2505)

Mr. Thomas and Mr. Prusak provided an overview of the functions of the DCFS Adoption & Permanency Resources Division, distributed a document titled, "Adoption & Permanency Resources Division," and reported the following:

-
- The mission of the Adoption and Permanency Resources Division is to recruit, study, prepare and support families to provide healthy, stable, loving and permanent homes to children who cannot safely live with their birth parents.

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Prusak added the following:

- To obtain a timeline from detention to adoption finalization, you must add the length of time from detention to termination of parental rights to the length of time from when the parental rights were terminated to when the adoption was finalized. Additionally, the information presented today is data from 2006 only, however, if data from 2003 was incorporated, it would show a much more dramatic decrease in the duration of the adoption process.
- Between January 2011 and March 2011, 29.1 percent of youth adoptions were being finalized within 24 months of coming into care. The State of California's average is approximately 32 percent and the Federal government median is 31.5.
- There is limited information on the number of failed adoptions. DCFS is very fortunate to have only a few adoptions fail. This population is hard to analyze because when a child leaves the system, the case is closed. However, if a child enters the system again, the child generally enters under a different name and identifiers. DCFS is working with the Casey Foundation and Inter-University Consortium to be able to better identify these children. Through a survey, approximately 50 children were identified as having a failed adoption. Further analysis of the 50 children revealed a disproportionate amount of male African American youth.
- The data referenced in the presentation is largely youth in the dependency system, although there about 50 relinquishment adoptions per year.
- DCFS does not handle international adoptions.
- DCFS believes that part of the improvements in the timeline for adoption is due in part to concurrent planning that DCFS engages in, which includes dual certification.

Ms. Wagner added that further research is being conducted on the benefits of dual certification by the Inter-University Consortium. The study on the impact of dual certification by the Inter-University Consortium is in its early stages. When DCFS began the dual certification, it was only for homes approved by state licensed DCFS approved homes.

- In October 2009, dual certification became a requirement when it was written into the Family Foster Agency (FFA) contracts. However, it is important to note that FFA families are not required to adopt a child.
- Although DCFS welcomes calls regarding the adoption of Safe Surrender babies, these callers are not eligible to adopt because DCFS already has families lined up for those Safe Surrender babies. However, DCFS does invite interested callers to attend orientations and adoption seminars.
- The timelines for the adoption of Safe Surrender babies is less than regular adoptions, approximately between 18 to 24 months.

Commissioner Kang commended the DCFS Adoptions team because he recently went through the adoption process and had a good experience.

After discussion, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Prusak presentation was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT](#)

11. Presentation on the Probation Department Adoption Program.
 - Lisa Campbell-Motton, Director, Placement Permanency & Quality Assurance/Group Home Monitoring Unit (11-2654)

Ms. Lisa Campbell-Motton reported the following:

- In January 2004, the State began the California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) to significantly strengthen the accountability system used in California to monitor and assess the quality of services provided on behalf of children and families. DCFS and Probation conduct these reviews jointly every three years. This year's Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) submitted in partnership with DCFS focused on youth transitioning out of the system with no permanent connections. Therefore, one of the main focuses of the

County Self-Assessments (CSA) and the System Improvement Plan (SIP) is earlier intervention for permanency.

- **One of the strategies for the SIP is to obtain foster homes for Probation youth. The PQCR also revealed the need for both DCFS and Probation to improve the foster home assessment process for relatives and non-relatives. Another recommendation was to improve collaboration across the systems as PQCR revealed that when youth crossed over from dependency into delinquency information was lost or not shared.**
- **Six years ago Probation instituted a Permanency Committee, with members of DCFS Social Workers, Probation Officers, County Counsel and representative from the Alliance for Children's Rights. As a result of their efforts, Probation finalized the first probation youth adoption in the nation in 2006. The most recent adoption in Los Angeles was in April 2010. There have been three total adoptions of probation youth in the nation, with Los Angeles County being the first/third and Yolo County being second. In addition, Probation currently has three additional adoptions pending.**
- **The Permanency Committee completed six legal guardianships between 2005 through 2009 and one was completed in 2010. With the assistance and support of DCFS manager, Sari Grant, Probation also achieved three media based recruitment orders with the approval of delinquency and dependency court Judges.**
- **Probation has been included in the Diligent Recruitment Grant, and Probation has about 146 youth on the permanency caseload, of which approximately 30 would qualify for the Diligent Recruitment Grant. The majority of youth are males and there is a disproportionate amount of African American youth.**

In response to questions posed by the Commission, Ms. Campbell-Motton added the following:

- **As part of the Diligent Recruitment Grant, DCFS and Probation will be reaching out to the faith-based community who may be able to provide mentors or just a place for the youth to go and attend gatherings.**

- The Commission stressed that not all youth will be adopted, and although teaching self-sufficiency is extremely important, youth must have adults as part of their lives as well.

After discussion, Ms. Campbell-Motton's presentation was received and filed.

Attachments: [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - Jared](#)
 [SUPPORTING DOCUMENT - JT](#)

12. DCFS Acting Director's Report by Dr. Jackie Contreras, Acting Interim Director, DCFS. (11-2504)

Diane Wagner, DCFS Acting Deputy Director for Service Bureau I reported the following:

- The Foster Home rate increase will be retroactive to May 31, 2011. For Fiscal Year 2011-12 it is estimated to cost approximately \$22 million with 35 percent from Federal funds, 31 percent from the State and 34 percent net county cost which equates to \$7.4 million. The County will absorb the cost upfront and will seek reimbursement. The only undetermined factor to getting reimbursed is the Federal Government's determination to raise the cap to the Title IV-E Waiver.
- Dr. Contreras will provide the Commission with an update on the status of the Title IV-E Waiver and address the Child Fatality Report at a future meeting.

After discussion, Ms. Wagner's verbal report was received and filed.

V. DISCUSSION

13. Discussion and approval to place a link on the Commission's website to iFoster (<http://www.ifoster.org/>). (11-2509)

After discussion, on motion of Commissioner Savelle, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg (Commissioners, Berger, Biondi, Friedman, Murray being absent), recommendation to add the iFoster link (<http://www.ifoster.org/>) to the Commission's website was approved.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

Matters Not Posted

14. Matters not on the posted agenda, to be discussed and (if requested) placed on the agenda for action at a future meeting of the Commission, or matters requiring immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take immediate action because of an emergency situation or where the need to take action arose subsequent to the posting of the agenda. (11-2506)

There were none.

Announcements

15. Announcements for the meeting of June 6, 2011. (11-2507)

There were none.

Public Comment

16. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest that are within the jurisdiction of the Commission. (11-2508)

There were none.

Adjournment

17. Adjournment for the meeting of June 6, 2011. (11-2510)

The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 a.m.